

Obituary for William Houghton Clabburn

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Transcription and annotations by John Barnard (updated 31 October 2021)

THE LATE MR W. H. CLABBURN

The funeral of the late Mr William Haughton [sic] Clabburn took place on Wednesday¹ morning, the hearse leaving Walpole House, Thorpe,² at a quarter past ten, and arriving at the Cemetery³ at a quarter past eleven. The late Mr Clabburn was the foremost representative of a textile industry, which for a time won for Norwich a fame that extended far beyond our shores. He was the son of Mr Thomas Clabburn, and a member of the firm of Clabburn, Sons & Crisp, who, at the time they were in fashion, produced shawls of such exquisite workmanship and artistic beauty, that they were in widespread demand, and brought Norwich once more to the front as a place noted for its textile fabrics.

It was in compliment to Norwich, and in particular to the firm of which Mr Clabburn as a member, that that gentleman was selected as one of the jurors for textile fabrics at the great International Exhibition of Industry held in Paris in 1865⁴. Mr Clabburn was the year following chosen by the Norwich Town Council to be Sheriff of his native city, and during his year of office he endeavoured to promote the prosperity of many of our local institutions. In the Blind Asylum⁵ and School both he and Mrs Clabburn took particular interest. It was during his Shrievalty that Mr Clabburn was appointed a Justice of the Peace for Norwich.

In his early years, Mr Clabburn, who was a man of powerful physique, was a great lover of aquatics, and as an oarsman had few equals. A Liberal in politics, Mr Clabburn belonged rather to the Whig than to the Radical section of the party, but was not often seen at political gatherings, more especially of late years. He was a good man of business, and when, owing to the fickleness of fashion, shawls went out of favour, he went into the crape manufacture and became Chairman of the Directors of the Norwich Crape Company. Because of his business qualifications he was some years ago elected on the Board of Directors of the Norwich Union Life Insurance Society.⁶ At the last annual meeting of that institution held in June, when he was re-elected a director, reference was made to his enforced absence from some meetings through illness, and hopes were expressed that he would soon be restored to health to resume his place on the directorate.

¹ Wednesday 17 July 1889; Clabburn died on Wednesday 10 July 1889.

² Clabburn's home on Yarmouth Road, Norwich

³ Earlham Cemetery, Earlham Road, Norwich, about 4 miles from Walpole House

⁴ This was actually the *Exposition Universelle* held in Paris in 1867; the original certificate appointing Clabburn as a juror is held by John Barnard [CLA/25]

⁵ This charity still exists, under the name of Vision Norfolk

⁶ Now part of Aviva plc

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